

Summer 2010

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Children's Justice Project

A PROJECT OF THE WYOMING SUPREME COURT

Children's Justice Project Brief

CJP is pleased to provide you this newsletter on local, state and national news and events related to juvenile courts and child welfare.

2010 Children's Justice Conference—Highlights

The annual conference was held in Laramie, Wyoming on June 2-4, 2010. The conference was a huge success with over 56 faculty and 360 participants in attendance representing all disciplines associated with juvenile court. The topics covered important foster care/juvenile court issues such as education stability/success, bridges out of poverty, linkage of unresolved trauma, mental health, juvenile detention, and safety decision-making among others. Conference evaluations came back quite positive. Overall, the conference was rated: Excellent - 44.2%; Very Good - 39.5%; Good - 9.3%; Average - 4.7%; and Poor - 2.3%.

Special thanks to Chief Justice Marilyn Kite, Justice Michael Golden, Judge James, Judge Campbell, Judge Hartman (Ret.), U.S. Senator Mike Enzi and Governor Dave Freudenthal for taking the time out of their busy schedules to participate in the conference. We truly appreciate their commitment and support toward children and families!

During the conference, Rick Robb, former DFS Protective Services Division Administrator was awarded the 2010 Children's Justice Project Excellence Award for his 36 year career in social services. Congratulations Rick!

Conference highlights were hearing personal stories from Trinity Thorpe-Lubneuski (Wyoming foster care alumna), Ashley Rhodes-Courter (Florida foster care alumna and accomplished national speaker and author), and Annie Blackledge (New York foster care alumna). Their stories were thought provoking and provided the audience with ideas on how to improve the foster care system.

We hope you consider joining us next year!

Tara Ackerman, CJP Coordinator & Anne Reiniger, CJP Consultant

**SAVE THE
DATE!**

**2011 Wyoming
Children's Justice
Conference**

June 14–17, 2011

**Little America
Hotel & Resort,
Cheyenne**



CJP *NEWS*



Available Publications

- ◆ *Wyoming Juvenile Court: A Handbook for Children (for ages 7-12)* is now available! Copies of the handbook may be downloaded from www.courts.state.wy.us/CJP. Email CJP Coordinator at tackerman@courts.state.wy.us for multiple copies.
- ◆ *Handbook for Parents, Guardians and Custodians on Juvenile Court Child Abuse and Neglect Proceedings, 3d Edition* (2010) is now available! Copies of the handbook may be downloaded from www.courts.state.wy.us/CJP. Email CJP Coordinator at tackerman@courts.state.wy.us to receive multiple copies.
- ◆ CJP has established a **listserv** for attorneys who represent parents in juvenile court. The purpose of the listserv is to establish a formal network among the attorneys who work on child protection cases in juvenile court. In addition, the listserv is a way for CJP to keep attorneys apprised of juvenile court initiatives, resources and/or training events. The listserv is for current members of the Wyoming State Bar who are in good standing and have a particular interest in parent representation issues. To join the listserv, please go to: <http://lists.washlaw.edu/mailman/listinfo/wyoparentscounsel>
- ◆ **JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN: MANUAL FOR GUARDIANS AD LITEM IN JUVENILE COURT AND TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS CASES**, Written by John M. Burman & Published by Wyoming Children's Justice Project. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the manual (\$20.00), please contact CJP Coordinator at tackerman@courts.state.wy.us no later than August 31, 2010.

CJP Sub-Grant Award Announcements

- ◆ Campbell County DFS is a recipient of a CJP Community Training Grant. The local DFS office will be collaborating with the Campbell County Attorney's Office to bring the "Signs of Safety" training to their community in August.
- ◆ Martha Nesslinger, MA and Teresa Jacobs Castano, MSW of Family Based Treatment Services, LLC of Albany County are the recipients of a CJP Community Training Grant. They plan to provide training to community members in Albany and Carbon Counties on evaluating parents' abuse and neglect issues, visitation, safety and long-term planning for abused and neglected children.
- ◆ CASA Program of the Fifth Judicial District is recipient of a CJP CASA sub-grant. The award provides funding to Park County to re-establish its CASA program.
- ◆ CASA of the Sixth Judicial District is the recipient of a CJP CASA sub-grant. The award provides funding to upgrade their computers to provide better tracking of abused and neglected children and to share permanency data with juvenile court stakeholders. In addition, the program will be working with its Board of Directors to develop a strategic plan in part to recruit enough volunteers for every abused/neglected child.

CJP CHILD PERMANENCY TRAINING SERIES FALL SCHEDULE

The CJP Child Permanency Training Series via *BlogTalkRadio* will resume in September! Everyone involved in the Wyoming juvenile court system is invited to participate. All sessions are from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Training Schedule

- September 9: The What and When of Reasonable Efforts
Presented by Margaret Burt, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
*1.0 Hour CLE Pending
- October 14: Children in Court
Presented by: TBD
*1.0 Hour CLE Pending
- November 18: Father Engagement: Bringing Back the Dads
Presented by: Carol Harper & Jonah Ipsak, University of Washington,
Institute for Children and Families
*1.0 Hour CLE Pending
- December 9: Holding Quality Permanency Hearings
Presented by Margaret Burt, JD, ABA Center on Children and the Law
*1.0 Hour CLE Pending

To participate in the training and/or to download archived training, go to:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/childrens-justice-project>

To learn more about the training series and to download training materials, visit the CJP website at www.courts.state.wy.us/CJP (click on the CJP Training Series Tab).

(Please note, the WSB allows self-study credit of up to 5 hours!)

Book Review

Somebody Else's Children: the Courts, the Kids, and the Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families

by John Hubner & Jill Wolfson 367 pp. Authors Choice Press an imprint of iUniverse, Inc. \$24.95 (paper)

For more than 30 years, I have worked in the child welfare field as both a social worker and as a lawyer representing agencies, parents, and children at various times. I thought I had seen and heard just about everything, so I approached this book with a "been there done that" attitude. But I was in for a surprise. This well-researched, well-written, engaging volume will find an audience not only with those who are new to child welfare, but for those seasoned professionals as well. It is also a book that you may want to share with friends and family to give them an understanding of what you do every day and the complexity of your work.

Huber and Wolfson are journalists who came to this topic without any experience in child welfare, although they were guided by one of the leaders in the field, the Hon. Leonard P. Edwards (ret.), the then presiding judge of the Santa Clara County California Juvenile Court and a featured speaker at the 2008 Wyoming Children's Justice Conference. The authors' goal was to shed light on the workings of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems by following children and families through shelters, courts, and foster homes. They use vignettes to illustrate the points they make and intersperse their "stories" with information on child development; the history of child welfare in America; the role of the judge, attorneys, social workers, and foster parents; and the various policies and laws, and their intended purposes. Some journeys through the system end well; many do not. We see successful outcomes, and we see where rules can interfere with common sense.

The stories are in many ways familiar. Here are just a few examples from the book:

Jenny is a pregnant teenager with a history of running away and sexually acting out who grew up in foster care, bouncing from home to home. She is determined to keep her baby out of the foster care system despite the many challenges she faces. We meet the CASA, the judge, and many other individuals who are trying to help her.

Nicky was born with a positive toxicology for cocaine. He was placed with a foster family, and his mother and father were referred for substance abuse treatment. Nicky's parents want desperately to kick the habit and have their son returned to them. We follow the three members of this family as they negotiate the system, with bumps along the way.

Kimberley is a young girl reported to the Child Abuse Hotline for being sexually abused by her brother. Charges were dropped, but the entire family has been negatively affected.

We also encounter Dennis and Debbie a divorced couple locked in a custody dispute with each accusing the other of abusing their son, Brian.

In an epilogue, the authors describe the outcomes for some of the children they follow in this book and how the reader can work to make a difference in the lives of "somebody else's children," about whom most people don't care at all.

-Anne Reiniger, CJP Consultant

Rick Robb receives 2010 Children's Justice Project Excellence

Rick Robb, former, DFS Protective Services Division Administrator, was the recipient of the 2010 Children's Justice Project Excellence Award. Mr. Robb began his 36-year career as a social worker in Torrington. In the years since, he worked in Sheridan, Sundance, and Cheyenne where he has served as Protective Services Administrator for the Department of Family Services. Over the years, Mr. Robb has been a county manager, an adoption consultant, a liaison for the tribes, town planner for Wamsutter, program manager for the Wyoming Public Assistance and Food Stamp Program, a recognized expert in sexual abuse matters, and a much sought-after presenter at national child welfare conferences.

The Honorable Michael Golden stated, "He has been a role model and mentor for countless colleagues and community partners. Rick and his wife served on the front lines of foster parenting while raising their own children who have followed their parents' excellent example. Rick is a shining reminder of how one person can positively impact the lives of others in need as well as an entire statewide system through hard work, perseverance, and passion. He is, as all of his nominators have described him, a true Wyoming hero."

The Wyoming Supreme Court Children's Justice Project (CJP) established the Excellence Award in recognition of the significant contributions by those who work on behalf of the children and families involved in the child welfare/juvenile court system. The Supreme Court presents the award at the annual Children's Justice Conference to a leading practitioner in the field of child welfare.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (CANI)

Georgia State University Law School

Atlanta, Georgia

October 12 - 15, 2010.



WYOMING SUPREME COURT

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We're on the Web!

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2010 Children's Justice Project Advisory Council Members

Honorable Michael Golden, Chair

Honorable Nena James, District Judge
Honorable John Fenn, District Judge
Honorable Steven Cranfill, District Judge
Honorable Norman Young, District Judge
Honorable Bernadine Craft, State Representative
Erin Mercer, Parent Advocate
Joann Odendahl, Court Administrator
Michael Blonigen, District Attorney
Jill Kucera, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Dan Wilde, DFS Deputy Director
Nicky Anderson, DFS Administrator
Ryan Roden, Deputy State Public Defender
Brenden McKinney, Casey Family Programs Director
Nickie Arney, Clerk of District Court
Traci Mears, Natrona County CASA Director
Lori Hutchinson, Child Advocate
Nicole Krieger, Teton County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
Vacant, State Senator
Vacant, Guardian ad Litem
Vacant, Parents' Counsel

2010 /2011 Calendar of Upcoming National & State Conferences

July 18–21, 2010	NCJFCJ's 73rd Annual Conference, San Diego, CA	
July 22–24, 2010	National Court Improvement Conference, Bethesda, MD	
August 8-11, 2010	Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases, Washington, DC	
Sept. 27–Oct. 1, 2010	Core College: The Role of the Juvenile Court Judge, Reno, NV	
March 27-30, 2011	National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law, Reno, NV	
June 14-17, 2011	Wyoming Children's Justice Conference, Cheyenne, WY	
July 24-27, 2011	7th Annual NCJFCJ Conference, New York, NY	

To add your conference to the calendar, please contact the CJP Coordinator at tackerman@courts.state.wy.us or phone 777-7629.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!